

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in the application. In the final Office Action dated February 6, 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,512,985 ("Whitefield"). Additionally, claims 13-16 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner stated the claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In this Amendment, claims 1 and 10-16 have been amended. No new matter is added by these amendments. Entry of this amendment is respectfully requested in order to place the application in condition of allowance or to narrow the issues for appeal. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the claims.

I. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

In the final Office Action dated February 6, 2006, the Examiner asserted that due to the fact the limitation of "automatically, without human intervention" was recited in the preamble, the limitation would not be given patentable weight. Applicant respectfully disagrees with the decision of the Examiner not to consider the limitation. However, to expedite prosecution, Applicant has amended independent claims 1 and 10-12 to move the limitation of "automatically, without human intervention" into the body of the claim.

As discussed in Applicant's response to the Office Action dated July 13, 2005, the portions of Whitefield cited by the Examiner disclose a method performed by a ***human operator***. In contrast, independent claims 1, 10, 11, and 12 recite monitoring the manufacturer of a plurality of objects ***automatically, without human intervention***. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

II. Claims 13-16

Claims 13-16 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but the Examiner stated the claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claim 13 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 1; claim 14 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 10; claim 15 has been amended to include

the limitations of claim 11; and claim 16 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 12.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments, Applicant submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration is therefore respectfully requested. If there are any questions concerning this Response, the Examiner is asked to phone the undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4200.

Respectfully submitted,



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